



Sample Letters

Although the students may or may not have been close to the deceased, the feelings of grief for previous losses can be triggered by the death. Parents need to know that a tragedy has occurred so that they can support the young person at home.

A letter should be brief and may include:

1. Expression of sympathy to the parents/spouse of the deceased.
2. Explanation of the facts surrounding the death, where appropriate, funeral details and how the school will be handling attendance at the funeral.
3. Some details of the deceased person's background.
4. Concluding comments with focus on the nature of the loss and support for the family.

To Parent(s)/Guardian(s) of Schoolmates

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We wish to extend our condolences to the name of family in the recent tragic death of their (son/daughter) name of student. *(Possible additional sentence addressing the circumstances or facts of the accident or illness, with permission).* Name was a description (i.e., happy, outgoing) student in name of Teacher's grade level class.

It is difficult to accept the loss of such a young person. Dealing with death affects each of us differently based on our relationship to the individual lost and/or our own trauma history. I encourage you to discuss name of deceased's death with your child, as you feel appropriate. Please realize that *(children/adolescents)* respond to tragedy or grief in different ways. I have enclosed some information on grief that may assist you.

Child and Youth Workers were in the school today as part of our Tragic Event Response Team. We can assure you that this support will continue to be available as long as it is needed. Many students participated in the creation of cards for presentation to name of deceased's family. This process itself can be very therapeutic.

The school supports any student's need to attend the funeral. We understand that this is a time for family and friends to find comfort in the company of each other. Funeral services will be held on date and time at location.

Our collective thoughts are with the surname of student family. Name of deceased will remain in the hearts and thoughts of *(his/her)* classmates, the staff and the name of school community.

Please feel free to call me at phone number if you have any questions or concerns about your child.

Sincerely,
Principal

Follow-Up Letter (Optional) – up to one week later

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Last week we wrote to inform you of the tragic death of deceased's name. The staff and students of the school continue to struggle with this loss.

Child and Youth Workers have been in the school assisting students and staff as part of our school's Tragic Event Response Team. Some students may require an ongoing connection with counsellors, perhaps as a result of their own trauma history. If your child seems unusually upset over a long period of time, you may wish to pursue a referral for counselling outside of the school. We would be pleased to help identify appropriate community resources and to assist you with a referral.

Again, we express our deepest sympathies to the deceased's family name family. If there is anything further we can do at this difficult time, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Principal

Death of a Staff Member

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We regret to inform you of the death of a school name (*Teacher/Educational Assistant/staff member*), name of staff member. Name of teacher has taught grade at our school since year (or *other such statement reflecting the deceased appropriately*).

Funeral services will be held at location of funeral on date and time of funeral. In order to allow staff representatives to attend the funeral, there will be necessary adjustments of program and /or time tabling for several classes on date and time.

Child and Youth Workers have been in the school assisting students and staff as part of our school's Tragic Event Response Team. Your child may wish to discuss this loss with you.

Our collective thoughts are with the surname of deceased family. Name of deceased will remain in the hearts and thoughts of the staff, students and the name of school community.

Sincerely,

Principal